

12th June 2012

Cllr David Walters
Mayor, Cowes Town Council
7 Baring Chambers
Denmark Road
Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7SY



Our Ref: RNW/
Your Ref:

Dear Councillor Walters

PROVISION OF AN ASPHALT PLANT TO MEET DEMAND FROM THE ISLAND HIGHWAYS PFI CONTRACT

We note with obvious interest that a meeting between Cowes Town Council and representatives from Eurovia was held on 31st May 2012 to discuss Eurovia's planning application for an asphalt plant at Medina Wharf.

The meeting notes available on your website make for interesting reading and we wanted to clarify Bardon Vectis' position. We note that Mr Riley's view is that Medina Wharf is the only suitable site on the Island for the importation of aggregates needed for the production of asphalt for the PFI contract, a view which we share. Indeed, we already import crushed rock aggregates from the mainland for use in asphalt manufacture via Medina Wharf as the Island's geology is somewhat limited in this regard. We do not, however, agree with some of the comments made concerning the suitability of Blackwater Quarry (St Georges Down) to house an asphalt plant.

The current asphalt plant at Blackwater Quarry is circa 25 years old and does not have the capacity to meet demand arising from the Highways PFI. Contrary to Eurovia's statement that the Blackwater Quarry asphalt plant is 'dependant upon the quarry being active for its Planning Permission – but it is close to being 'mined out'', the asphalt plant, in fact, does not have a specific planning permission at all and is considered to be lawful development purely by the passing of time without enforcement action by the Council. It follows that the existing asphalt plant benefits from full planning permission independent from the quarry operations. In any case, any planning application for a replacement asphalt plant at Blackwater would be the subject of a new application separate from quarry operations. At current levels of output, Blackwater Quarry contains approximately 7 years of permitted sand and gravel reserves, with additional satellite reserves around the Island which would be brought to Blackwater Quarry for processing projected to last well beyond 7 years. Any suggestion that Blackwater Quarry is unsuitable for the ongoing production of asphalt is unfounded.

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We have also noted the number and content of objections raised by Islanders to the planning application at Medina Wharf. Clearly, as part of the Wight Highways Partnership consortium, Bardon Vectis had plans of its own to apply for planning permission for a replacement asphalt plant at Blackwater Quarry. Following the announcement that Vinci had won the bid, those plans were shelved, but we now feel it worthwhile to resurrect the planning application and submit it. We expect to be in a position to submit a planning application at Blackwater Quarry within the next two weeks, which should give Islanders a realistic alternative to the Medina Wharf scheme. It should be noted that Eurovia has no interest in Blackwater Quarry, but we would be perfectly willing to discuss the possibility of supplying them with asphalt to meet PFI demand. It should also be noted that asphalt production at Blackwater Quarry will carry on regardless of whether or not asphalt is supplied to the PFI contract.

We trust the above clarifies our position. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please note that this letter has been copied to Stuart Love, Director of Economy & Environment and Councillor George Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Environment at the Isle of Wight Council.

Yours sincerely



R N WESTELL
Estates Manager - South East

Cc: Stuart Love)
Councillor George Brown)
Steve Burton) by email only
Colin Jones)
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